THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. October 29, 1943 Tishri 30, 5704 No. 13

EDITORIALS
- *Joint Statement of the Three Faiths on the Post-War World*
- *Repeal All Racial Laws!*
- *The Un-American Spirit of Hillburn*

THE CENTRALITY OF THE SYNAGOGUE
By Ira Eisenstein

ZIONISM AND SEGREGATION
By Elmer N. Lear

THE RETREAT OF THE ECONOMIC MOTIVE
By Theodore Friedman

BOOK NOTES
By Samuel Dinin

DISCUSSION IN THEOLOGY
By Mordecai M. Kaplan

REALITIES AND VALUES *CORRESPONDENCE*

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—o—

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EDITORIALS

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE THREE FAITHS ON THE POST-WAR WORLD

WE hail with enthusiasm the publication of a joint statement by the Catholic Church, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Synagogue Council of America of a shared platform of principles for the post-war world.

This pronouncement would have been a signal event, even if its auspices had been less distinguished. It expresses forthrightly and positively the attitudes of the great religious traditions on the issues of social reconstruction. Proceeding in each instance from a theological base, it proposes the following seven principles as a guide to the reconstruction of human society when the war is over:

1) The moral law must govern world society. Not only individuals but nations, states, and international society are subject to the will of God as embodied in the moral law.

2) The rights of the individual must be assured. An international declaration of rights must be established. States as well as individuals must repudiate racial, religious, or other discrimination in violation of those rights.

3) The rights of weak, oppressed or colonial peoples must be protected. The progress of undeveloped and colonial or oppressed peoples toward political responsibility must be the object of international concern.

4) The rights of minorities must be secured.

5) International machinery to maintain peace with justice must be organized to provide drastic limitation of armaments, compulsory arbitration, and the use, when necessary, of adequate sanctions to enforce the law.

6) International economic cooperation must be developed.

7) A just social order within each state must be achieved to assure a standard of living adequate for self-development and family life, decent conditions of work, and participation by labor in decisions affecting its welfare.

But what makes this pronouncement so significant and so hopeful an omen is the fact that it represents a cooperative enterprise on the part of the three constituent groups. As such it is altogether unprecedented in the religious history of our country. This is the first time that the Catholic Church, the organized Protestant Church, and the organized Synagogue have, as a whole and officially, taken joint action on attitudes they hold

in common. May this be an augury for the future.

Had such a pronouncement been issued by any one of the participating bodies, it would most certainly have carried considerable influence. But, coming as a unified expression of all the major religious groupings, its power is immeasurably enhanced. It cannot help but affect profoundly both American public opinion and American political action.

It is then an immensely promising and useful measure which the three communions have taken. The publication of a pronouncement, however, no matter how important it may be, should not be regarded as more than a first step. Now the constituent communions must move forward to practical and realistic implementation of their shared viewpoint. Each of them must, in the first instance, apply the principles it affirms in its own internal life and in its social attitude. The pronouncement calls for social justice within every nation; for freedom for minorities. It repudiates all forms of racial and religious prejudice. If these positions are to be more than high-sounding words, the place at which the organized religions ought to begin is in their own backyards.

And the constituent faiths ought collectively to use their pooled influence in the direction of achieving the purposes to which they are committed.

We doubt the wisdom of the proposal advanced in certain quarters that the various religious communions be accorded representation in peace negotiations. But we do recommend most earnestly a joint effort on the part of the churches which have issued this pronouncement to win its realization. A standing liaison committee among the three faiths might very well be set up. Such a committee ought to use the pronouncement as a standard by which all concrete peace proposals might be judged. In the case of those that conform to its basic principles, it ought to bring the weight of organized religion to bear in their support. Those which do not, it ought to resist with all the power of its immensely powerful backing. It would be a great gain for America and mankind were such a committee to operate in Washington, in London, and wherever peace conferences may take place.

It has always been our contention that religion has an important role to play in the remaking of our social order and that it must play that role courageously and forcefully—that otherwise it will forfeit the respect of thoughtful persons and, indeed, lose a large part of its reason for being. This most recent development demonstrates that the historic religions are awake to their responsibility. May they eventually have the wisdom and the power to discharge it to the full.

REPEAL ALL RACIAL LAWS!

THE President has come out in favor of the repeal of laws excluding the Chinese from admission to the United States. The subcommittee of the House to which the repeal bill was assigned has voted in favor of the bill. It is now very likely that the measure will become a law, and that Chinese will be eligible for immigration to our shores.

If the bill becomes a statute, this will be one of the important steps resulting from the war advancing the democratic front internally. It will belong to the class of measures to which the President's orders creating the Fair Employment Practice Committee belong.

But its shortcomings must not pass unnoticed. For one thing, the Chinese, unless born in the United States, are ineligible for American citizenship. If the Chinese people are eligible for immigra-

tion to America, there is no justification for excluding them from citizenship.

Furthermore, on principle there is no reason for limiting the scope of the bill to the Chinese. Other peoples belonging to the "yellow race" are also excluded. The natives of India, Burma, Siam, Japan and other countries of the Pacific are branded as "undesirables" and are excluded from immigration and citizenship. Repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws will mitigate but not remove the practice of discrimination against peoples by reason only of their color or race. "The New York Times" editorially remarked the other day that it is to be hoped that other peoples of the Pacific will also soon win the right to enter the United States on a quota basis—but never the Japanese. As long, however, as Germans are eligible for admission on a quota basis, the exclusion of the Japanese must be considered as based on racial, and not political, considerations.

There are in the United States only about 130,000 Japanese, and of them 70,000 are American citizens. The loyalty of these citizens to the country of their adoption has been demonstrated more than once. Recently the newspapers have described their heroism in battle—on the American side. The injustice we did them when we uprooted them from their homes and destroyed their businesses shortly after Pearl Harbor, and placed them in relocation centers, is being realized today. The Japanese in America have never had a crime or delinquency problem, and have never imposed themselves as a relief problem on the community. They are a decent and gentle folk. Yet they are ineligible for citizenship, and have not been permitted since 1924 to bring into the United States even their wives or children.

This is not a plea for the Japanese alone; it is a plea for the complete and radical abolition of all laws discriminating against a people, any people, solely because of their race or color. All exclusionary and discriminatory laws should be repealed, otherwise the seeds of future conflicts and wars will remain in a fertile soil, watered by a feeling of resentment against injustice and dishonor.

THE UN-AMERICAN SPIRIT OF HILLBURN

IN the village of Hillburn, New York, only an hour's journey from New York City, the Board of Education had been practicing racial segregation in its school system for over 54 years. All the Negro pupils were assigned to an old, inadequate school, while all the white pupils went to a modern school. The Negro pupils went on strike, and engaged a teacher to conduct classes privately. The school authorities added insult to injury by prosecuting the parents for causing truancy among their children. The case was taken by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People before Commissioner George D. Stoddard. On October 11, the Commissioner ruled that the school board was violating the New York law against racial discrimination in public schools, and he ordered the "Negro" school closed and all pupils assigned to the modern "white" school. This decision was deeply gratifying to all persons who respect democratic principles. It was *not* gratifying to the parents of the white children.

They withdrew their children from the school and registered them in various private schools, thus thwarting the efforts of the Negro men and women to break down barriers of race. The extraordinary opportunity to demonstrate solidarity among all Americans, at a time when thousands are dying to crush racism and fascism, was tragically ruined. What is worse, the Negroes will probably be blamed for the fact that several teach-

ers may either lose their jobs or be forced to go to other communities. Now that the white children have left, there are too many teachers in the school. Judging from the temper of Hillburn, the whites will certainly not be held responsible for these dislocations.

If we wanted to act the Pollyanna, we might wax optimistic, and compare the case to the Canterbury, Connecticut case of 1832, when a Quakeress attempted to bring a young Negro girl into her private school. The whites withdrew then, as now; but when the school mistress turned the entire school over to Negro pupils, a law was passed in the state legislature forbidding such a school to exist without the permission of the town, the teacher was imprisoned and brought to trial. Although the jury disagreed, the school had to close finally because it was almost destroyed by a mob. We might say that the 1943 Hillburn affair is an improvement in that no outbreaks of violence have been reported.

But unfortunately we cannot be too optimistic. There have been riots in the United States this year, and there is no guarantee that more riots will not occur. Every week brings fresh reports of growing tension in the country. Only last week, *PM* disclosed that Jews in Boston were constantly being terrorized by gangs of hoodlums.

Shall we follow the policy of hush-hush, and minimize the seriousness of these acts of violence and these reports of discrimination? Surely we should have learned from the German experience that such appeasement only puts off the day of ultimate resistance. It is about time that the citizens of our country woke up to the danger of a living and threatening fascism. Anti-Negro acts, and anti-Jewish acts, at a time like this, are tantamount to treason.

It is equally important, however, to bring to light evidences of a different spirit in our midst. Recently, seventy-seven Negro Americans sent in a contribution of $755 to the UJA in New York. This contribution was not the result of any formal appeal by the UJA to Negroes. It was rather, in the words of Mr. Lester B. Granger, Executive Secretary of the National Urban League, "a voluntary expression of these persons of their interest in the problem of their fellow-men of Jewish faith . . . a reaffirmation of our conviction that we are under one God, one people united in one cause." We are touched by this generous gesture, and we echo the prayer of Mr. Granger: "May this small gift stand as additional testimonial to the bond of friendship that must grow between two peoples with a glorious history and a still more glorious future."

This spirit—and not the spirit of Hillburn—will rid the world of hate, strife and war.

REALITIES AND VALUES

An editorial in *The Jewish Post* of Indianapolis contains an important recommendation suggested by communal participation in the American Jewish Conference It urges the establishment of a state-wide Jewish community organization utilizing the machinery set up for the election of Indiana's delegate to the Conference. It lists a number of items for the agenda of the proposed organization, such as the conduct of annual fund-raising drives, particularly in the smaller communities which are frequently neglected in large national drives, the provision for refugee immigrants, etc. But its main emphasis is on work in the religious field. It calls attention to several communities "of imposing size" which "have no provision whatsoever for religious services, no provision for religious education of their young, in fact no contact with organized Jewish religious life,

except that gained, in some cases, by the once-yearly attendance at synagogues in Indianapolis." We hope this editorial will bring results. It is right both in its emphasis on comprehensive community organization, locally as well as nationally, and in its recognition of community responsibility for religion no less than for philanthropy and Zionism. An elaboration of this thought is contained in the article on the "Centrality of the Synagogue" in this issue of our magazine.

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"IT IS TO BE REGRETTED THAT so important a subject as Jewish education was relegated to a place so low down on the agenda of the Zionist Conference that the delegates were scarcely able to devote the necessary time towards a full discussion of its many and varied problems." No, this is not a comment on the most recent convention of the Zionist Organization of America; it is taken from the *South African Jewish Times* and refers to a South African Zionist Conference. But it might have been said, and with truth, about our Zionist Convention. Apparently the disposition of Zionist Organizations to wash their hands of responsibility for Jewish education is a widespread malady. When will Zionist leadership realize that the problem of Jewish survival in the Diaspora and in Palestine is one problem and that its solution depends on a Jewish education motivated by the will to live as a free and responsible people, the bearer of a religious civilization?

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WE HAVE NO OBITUARY COLumn, but we cannot pass by in silence the loss of two such Jews as Saul Tchernichovsky and Franz Oppenheimer, both of whom passed away since our last issue. Both were creative spirits, one in the realm of poetry, the other in the realm of social engineering. The Hebrew poetry of Tchernichovsky is characterized by its broad humanism no less than by its intense nationalism (many of his works are translations from the poetry of other languages), by its revolt against the ugly and sordid in Jewish life, no less than by its loyalty to the Jewish people. Like the Zionist movement it is at once an expression of continuity with the Jewish past and of revolutionary protest against a hide-bound and sterile traditionalism. Franz Oppenheimer, was celebrated as an economist and sociologist, having had a distinguished academic career in the universities of Berlin and Frankfurt, until the accession of the Nazis. He was the author of a book, "The State," which won him no little fame. But his place in Jewish history will probably be best represented by his contribution to the institution of cooperative colonization in Palestine. Although the settlement of Merchavia, which followed his plan, was not successful, his ideas stimulated other experiments with cooperative colonization which have been the very backbone of Jewish resettlement in Palestine. He died a lonely man at the age of 69 in Los Angeles.

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THE NUMBER OF RABBIS SERVing with the armed forces as chaplains has created a serious shortage in this country. The United Synagogue of America reports that 45 of the rabbis serving its congregations have entered the chaplaincy, and that it expects 40 additional rabbis to do so in the near future. It recommends, as a mitigation if not a solution of the problem created by this shortage of rabbis, (1) that, in the larger cities, presidents and rabbis of neighboring congregations meet and arrange to take care jointly of the religious needs of their congregations; (2) that a similar plan be adopted for neighboring communities where the Jewish population is more scattered; and (3) that rabbis who have their own congregations offer their

services to help near-by congregations who are without rabbinic leadership. If these plans work out they should have a beneficent permanent effect. They should contribute to the break-down of that narrow competitiveness and institutional isolationism which have been the bane of our religious life.

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To Chaplain Edward Sandrow we are indebted for a clipping from the "World Call," a magazine for "Disciples of Christ," a Protestant denomination. The writer of the article quoted describes the function of the minister: "As a prophet he is a 'man of vision,' a stern monitor of justice, a critic of his day and age, a reconstructionist." Apparently, even the Christian ministers are expected to be reconstructionists. Perhaps, if this becomes fashionable, the Jews may take it up.

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The American Federation of Labor put itself on record as opposing any relaxation of our immigration laws. Frankly we are disappointed. We had hoped that the plight of the refugees would have moved the Federation to revise its traditional policy, all the more so since the Federation showed sufficient understanding of the plight at least of Jewish refugees to advocate the fulfilment of the international pledges with reference to the Jewish National Home. To be sure, we cannot expect the Federation to support an uncontrolled flood of immigration which would endanger the position of the American worker. But the assumption that every immigrant reduces the number of jobs available for native Americans is demonstrably false. In Palestine, for example, immigration has immeasurably increased the economic absorptive capacity of the country, and there is no good ground to assume that the absorptive capacity of America has reached its limit. The A.F.L. might very well, without endangering the position of the American worker, have supported, for example, the bill introduced by Senator Barbour which asks for the admission into the United States annually of 100,000 refugees who would be permitted to remain in the country for the duration of the war and for six months thereafter.

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The House Committee on Post Office and Post Roads has under consideration two bills introduced respectively by Representative Walter A. Lynch and Representative Samuel Dickstein, which would bar from the mails, to use the language of the Lynch bill, "defamatory or false statements which intend to expose persons designated therein by race or religion to hatred." The Lynch bill goes so far as to make the circulation of such matter a criminal offense. This is the kind of legislation asked for by the American Jewish Conference in its resolution calling for the outlawing of anti-Semitism.

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At a recent press conference, President Roosevelt expressed himself vehemently on the subject of Argentina's ban on the Jewish press. Four hours later, the ban was removed. Rarely have we had a more dramatic illustration of the influence our President can wield if he chooses to exert it. Liberals in our country have begun to wonder why it is that Mr. Roosevelt has seen fit to withhold his tremendous power, especially when issues of democratic moment are at stake. We Jews may, also, wonder why it is that he has not spoken up on the subject of the Palestine White Paper. The President was quick to see the connection between suppressing newspapers and fascism. Surely he can also see the connection between appeasement, as represented by the White Paper, and the tragic state of the world.

The Centrality of the Synagogue*

By IRA EISENSTEIN

ONE of the urgent problems of Jewish life, which has presented itself both to the Rabbinical Assembly of America and to the Central Conference of American Rabbis has been the growth of so-called "secularism" in Jewish life. Exactly what secularism means has never been clearly defined. Later in this paper I shall have occasion to comment upon its meaning. But behind the cry of secularism has been the general sense of the decline in influence, prestige and power of the synagogue and its official leaders, the rabbis. We are told that a radical and ominous change has come upon Jewish life in this land, a change which augurs ill for the future of Judaism. There was a time when the synagogue was the focus of Jewish life, and the rabbi was the ultimate authority. Today, the synagogue appears to be eclipsed, and the rabbis' authority to be usurped by others or relinquished by themselves.

In the development of Jewish life in America, function after function of the synagogue has been withdrawn from its sphere. The large organizations of philanthropy have taken away some of these functions. Fraternalism has carved out its sphere of influence. Political movements, like Zionism, have grown up outside the synagogue. What is left for the synagogue is the exercise of an influence over a small number of families associated with congregations, an influence which is, depending upon the rabbi, strong and beneficent or weak and innocuous but, in any event, limited. The larger areas of Jewish life are untouched by the synagogue; and the communal efforts, which involve large sums of money and the great variety of Jewish institutions, are without benefit of clergy.

This is indeed a serious situation, because we Jews regard ourselves as essentially a religious group, and although we define religion in broad terms, to include many other activities and interests than are usually subsumed under that term, we cannot afford to permit the one, self-consciously religious, deliberately and avowedly religious institution to occupy less than a position of primacy in our lives. The situation as it exists is certainly deplorable. We must not forget that life is not static, but dynamic, and that, therefore, when the synagogue loses status in the eyes of Jews the tendency is for them to dissociate themselves from it further, and to force the synagogue even further into the background. The organizations which have forged to the fore tend to attract the rising generation, who prefer to be identified with successful enterprises. We are dealing with a circumstance subject to the cumulative effects of time.

Hence the timeliness and the immediacy of the question posed today. "The Centrality of the Synagogue" requires attention at once.

The Traditional Relation Between The Synagogue and the Community

Before proceeding to an analysis of proposed solutions, it is necessary to articulate some of the basic attitudes which ought to prompt rabbinical organizations in seeking for the synagogue the central position among Jewish communal institutions. In deploring the loss by the synagogue of its position of centrality, their concern must be with the total welfare

*Delivered before the Joint Session of the Rabbinical Assembly and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

of the community and of religion. Rabbis are placed in the position of special pleaders unless they make clear to the world that they are not concerned with their personal positions as rabbis. The truth is that, at the present time, the rabbi is generally the best paid and the most highly respected of Jewish professional workers. Educators, teachers, principals, social workers, professors often envy the status and the prestige of the rabbi. It would be ungracious indeed on the part of rabbis to complain about their personal *kavod.* They must make it clear that they are not interested in power. They must give no ground for the public to suspect that they want to monopolize all forms of religious expression.

One of the most prevalent proposals for the solution of our problem is the one which advises a return to the good old days, when the synagogue was the center of Jewish life. In fact, the main cry against the existing situation is based upon the fact that Jewish life is said to have diverged from its historic pattern in which the centrality of the synagogue was a constant. It would be well therefore to take a look at the Judaism of our fathers and ask ourselves: To what extent was the synagogue actually central?

Israel was always referred to—at least since the destruction of the Second Temple—as *Keneset Yisrael.* In that respect, the synagogue, or *keneset,* was the central fact of Judaism. But careful scrutiny will reveal that *keneset* so used connoted the whole of Judaism. The synagogue was co-extensive with all of Jewish life. It was Israel itself. The synagogue thus understood was quite different from the synagogue as we know it today. To make the matter altogether clear, it is necessary that we refer today to the *congregation,* rather than to the synagogue.

Now, the congregation was not the core and the focus of Jewish life at all. The unit of Jewish organization was the community. Professor Salo Baron's recent work on the Jewish Community bears out this thesis with remarkable clarity. The Kehillah, or community, was the unique achievement of the Jewish people, an instrument for maintaining Jewish solidarity and performing the functions necessary for Jewish survival. The community had numerous tasks to perform: judicial, educational, civic protective, etc. One of the major functions of the community was to maintain congregations. "The provision of facilities for congregational worship was a major responsibility of the community" (v. 2, p. 126). So seriously did the community take its responsibility that it sometimes utilized its power of sanctions to insure the proper financing of congregations. The majority could force the minority to contribute to the construction of a house of worship. This was considered normal procedure. The exigencies of the situation, however, sometimes forced our ancestors to deviate from the norm. For example, private synagogues — particularly synagogues housed in private homes—were condoned and even encouraged; not because the Jews believed that congregations ought to be the private business of any individual Jew, but because Christian decrees often forbade the construction of additional synagogues, and this device helped to circumvent the law.

Discussing the finances of the congregation, Baron writes: "The revenues of individual synagogues, derived from the sale or lease of seats and honorary functions and from offerings during the reading of scriptural lessons, although mainly used to defray their autonomous expenditures, often helped the communal budget." This does not mean, as might be surmised, that the congregation supported the community. It does mean that the community was obliged to maintain the congregation, and responsibility for the enterprise was in the hands of the

kehillah. However, since the *kehillah* undertook to supply the congregation with whatever funds it might require over and above what it took in in the normal course of functioning, it was equally entitled to whatever surplus might arise in the same course.

When the decline of the synagogue today is deplored, we are usually treated to the description of the synagogue as the center of all Jewish activity. We are told that the synagogue was the *bet hatefillah*, the *bet hamidrash* and the *bet hakeneset*. This is intended to convey the thought that all important functions were carried on in the synagogue. That description is certainly a true one. In fact, one might go further and point out that more than that went on within its walls. Baron says: "The common designation of the synagogue as the *bet hamidrash*, the *schola* and the *schule* was fully justified. The Jewish court, and frequently the special state courts for mixed Judeo-Christian litigations, met in the synagogue yard, if not in the hall. Here announcements of bans, sales, lost objects and forthcoming marriages were made and all sorts of service performed whose secular far outshadowed their religious elements." (v. 2, p. 144). This still does not mean that the congregation as such was the center of Jewish life. It does mean that the community, since it supported the congregation, felt itself free to make use of the facilities of the synagogue building to carry on many of the functions for which it (the community) was responsible.

If the word central means anything, we may conclude from these considerations that the *kehillah* and not the congregation occupied a position of centrality in the traditional Jewish life.

The Secularization of Jewish Life

With the coming of Emancipation, a revolution took place in Judaism. Jews were granted citizenship, equal opportunity to take their place in the political, economic and cultural life of the larger community. The advantages of this new arrangement for the individual Jew while it lasted, and when it actually worked, are well known. The implications of the new set-up for collective Jewish life, however, have not been fully explored. One significant effect was to liquidate large areas of Jewish self-determination. The validation of marriage was virtually taken over by the state; public education took over the major task of rendering Jews and others literate; Jewish law no longer determined economic relations between Jew and Jew.

In the grand compromise which the State effected with the Church, worldly affairs were placed in the hands of the State, spiritual affairs in the hands of the Church. The State dealt with the body, the Church with the soul. The State concerned itself with this world, the Church basically with the world to come. This dichotomy has had many disastrous effects, and is responsible for many of the ills and much of the confusion in our contemporary thinking. But what interests us here is that the so-called separation of Church and State which marked the relations of Christianity to the modern national state was carried over into Jewish life in two ways. First, a similar basis for the persistence of Judaism within the State was set up, and second, a duplication of this process was introduced into the internal life of the Jewish group.

The social process by which the separation of Church from State, or more accurately, religion from life, took place in modern Jewish history is interesting to observe. At first when Emancipation was fresh upon the scene, Jews were at a loss to understand how this new prenomenon would affect them. But they soon decided that, since the State had dissolved the community and had taken over many of its functions, Jews would be adequately

cared for so far as their worldly interests were concerned. What was left for the Jews as a group to provide for their individual members were the opportunity for worship and the facilities to educate themselves so that they might be qualified to participate in worship.

Originally, the congregation both in England and here tried to be the community. It tried to conduct a full educational program for the young. And indeed, the congregation was able to handle all the existing business. The congregation actually sufficed to run Jewish affairs. There was little to do. If, in addition to worship and study, some charitable activities were needed, the congregation was perfectly able to conduct them. Before long, however, the inevitable process asserted itself. Extra-congregational services were required to fill felt needs. These services grew as the population grew, and as life became more complex. Now, however, a new factor was introduced: congregations were of different types, and of varying degrees of traditionalism. The needs of the population did not spring out of the specific theological convictions or ritual practices of the Jews. They grew out of conditions to which Jews of all shades of belief were subject. Hence, for these several reasons, communal bodies developed which cut across the divisions in congregational life, and which performed functions that had become too difficult for the congregations as such to handle.

In time, these communal bodies grew in size and importance, and they became "secular." Their secularism must be understood in two senses: 1) they began to constitute a new *kehillah,* this time quite different from the traditional *kehillah* in that they no longer assumed responsibility for the support and maintenance of the congregation and its religious functions; 2) their leaders carried on their activities in a new spirit; they ceased to regard these social services as a means of perpetuating the Jewish people or of expressing the religious idealism of the group. In this respect, the religious leaders were as responsible as any others in fostering the secularist attitude toward philanthropy and social work. It is true that the rabbis have always stressed that the effects of religion must make themselves felt in every phase and activity of life. But they have, at the same time, encouraged the notion that religion as such, consisting of worship and the affirmation of the Moral Law, can and should be made the special function of the synagogue. This has led to the inference that whatever Jews do outside the synagogue is secular and incidental as far as Judaism was concerned. They forgot, as Professor Kaplan put it, "that religion and ethical idealism mean nothing apart from the particular civilization through which they find expression. Where they do not arise from concrete realities, spirituality and idealism become pale and bloodless platitudes." (Judaism as a Civilization, p. 219). The net result was that religion did become pale and bloodless and the vast possibilities of embodying religion in collective group life were unrealized.

Let us further analyze the growth of secularism in the sense of the exclusion of religious activities from the program of Jewish community organizations. What has happened? Jewish life was originally highly organized and organic. During the early period of adjustment, it became disorganized and finally over-organized. Small groups were created to offer various services: homes for the aged, orphan asylums, hospitals, etc. In due course, the inefficiency of frequent and competitive campaigns for funds led to the organization of Federations. With the gradual collaboration, and the ultimate coalescence of these organizations, the congregation was left out in the cold.

Now we observe a strange phenomenon:

the congregation becomes the supporter of the community. The Federations and Welfare Funds come to the congregations and insist that they must aid in raising funds for the various extra-congregational bodies. Rabbis today are certainly aware of the extent to which they and their congregations are called upon for this purpose. To such an extent has fund-raising become a preoccupation that many synagogues seem to have little time for either religion or culture. They are either raising money for themselves or for others. The result has been that the congregations themselves have fallen victim to the secularizing process. We have come to the point where, not only is the congregation not the place where all communal business is transacted (appealing for funds is not the same as conducting the business which is financed by them)—but where we cannot even be certain that what does take place is "religious."

Reverting to the Traditional System

How shall we cope with this situation? We have seen that a return to the so-called good old days would not place the synagogue at the center of Jewish life in the sense in which those who advocate this course understand the institution of the synagogue and the concept "central." Nevertheless, it appears to me that the only true solution does lie in a return to the type of community organization which was the outstanding characteristic of Jewish life before modern times. Naturally, important modifications in this arrangement must be made. Primarily, of course, the modern *kehillah* must differ from that of earlier generations by constituting a voluntary, rather than an imposed, organization. In democratic countries like ours, all associations of this kind must depend upon the free will and consent of those who enter into them, and upon the freedom to withdraw at will. No one among us is the least desirous of invoking official status for the community, nor of asking for government enforcement of its decisions.

Another important difference must be the absence of segregation. The modern *kehillah* does not necessarily imply creating a barrier which might cut off social, intellectual, cultural or any other kind of intercourse between Jews and the rest of the population. No one wants to ghettoize the Jews. Democracy is based upon the assumption that there shall be free flow of ideas and ideals within the nation. The modern *kehillah* would not violate this fundamental premise of democracy. Uniculturalism for the Jew is furthest from the minds of those who advance the idea of *kehillah*.

In other respects, however, the modern *kehillah* would be the natural heir of the *kehillah* of pre-modern days: it would be an organic community serving all the needs which Jews experience by virtue of the fact that they are Jews. At present, we all regard it as our duty as Jews to satisfy the needs of Jews which rise out of abnormal situations in their lives. We provide homes for the orphaned, and for the aged. We care for the sick, and we seek to rehabilitate the delinquent. We feed the hungry, here and abroad. But it is not yet generally regarded as the duty of the entire community to create opportunities for Jews to express themselves through education, the arts or religion. These we leave, for the most part, to those individuals who happen to have a peculiar appreciation of these values. A beginning may be discerned on the American scene, however, of a sense of communal responsibility for education. The various bureaus of Jewish education, and particularly the Jewish Education Committee of New York, are indications of the awareness that all Jews should be responsible for these normal functions. But in religion little has been done. To be sure, some community centers conduct

religious services. But, strangely enough, these services are considered competitors to synagogue services! Often enough have I heard rabbis complaining that community centers had no right to impinge on the territory of the congregations!

Is it not a strange paradox that we Jews, who regard ourselves as forming a religious community, should spend communal funds on everything but religion? Religion is the step-child of the community. It must go out and seek supporters from whence it can find them. You will not discover congregations on the budgets of Federations and Welfare Funds.

My thesis then is this: if we hope to overcome the secularist tendencies of Jewish life, and to bring the synagogue back into a position of primacy, we must go back to the traditional system of the *kehillah* in which the institutions of religion become once again the major responsibility of the Jewish community.

Some Difficulties and How to Meet Them

The difficulties involved in establishing this kind of *kehillah* are undoubtedly numerous. But if the thesis is valid, the difficulties should be challenges and not deterrents. Let us examine a few of the difficulties and see whether they are fundamental, or incidental. The first problem is this: there are varieties of religious service and practice. If the community makes the maintenance of congregations its responsibility, what kind of religion shall it maintain? Is not one of the reasons that the State and Church had to part company that there were so many varieties of faith that religion had to be left to individual preference?

In the first place, our experience in the armed forces today reveals that it is possible for one chaplain to serve thousands of Jews satisfactorily, although these young men derive from all the various types of homes and backgrounds that there are on the American scene. We may well learn a lesson from our government. It has assumed responsibility for the spiritual aspect of the soldiers' lives. Our government realizes that it is not enough merely to feed, clothe and arm the men, and to provide hospitalization for the wounded. The soldiers want worship, education and spiritual guidance. They get these from the chaplains. Our rabbis go into this service not as Orthodox, Conservative or Reform chaplains—not even as Jewish chaplains, as a matter of fact—but as chaplains. From all that I have heard, the chaplains are doing a remarkable job. Here is a concrete example of how a community can sponsor religious attitudes. When the war is over, the Jewish community ought to treat the problem of religious life in exactly the same way.

What about different types of services? This problem should be treated similarly: if there are enough men and women who desire Orthodox services in a community, facilities should be provided for them. If enough Jews demand Reform services, they are entitled to them. My guess is that, before very long, we shall see upon the American scene a synthesis of forms and we shall probably emerge before many years go by with two types: Orthodox and non-Orthodox; and every community in the land could handle two types of congregations without difficulty.

Another example of how differences in principle can be reckoned with in a community-sponsored activity is the experiment being carried on in New York by the Jewish Education Committee. Here we see, in a great metropolis, a communal agency in which at least five different types of educational work are carried on: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Yiddishist and a fifth which might be called: education for the hitherto completely indifferent Jew. Yet it is possible to recognize the legitimacy of each type, and to establish an atmosphere in which each re-

spects and cooperates with the rest, and in which each is supported by funds and assisted by consultants and experts engaged by the over-all Committee.

One of the major objections against this plan will undoubtedly be raised by the rabbis who will want to know how this will affect them. My opinion is that this arrangement would be a boon to the rabbinate. In the first place, the rabbi would no longer be the private and personal representative of a small group of families. The rabbi would not be subject to the whims and caprices of any small group of trustees or members. The rabbi would become the servant of the entire community, responsible to the authorities of the *kehillah*. He might achieve more security, better tenure and greater prestige. But these advantages are the least. He would be in a position to influence larger numbers of Jews. His message would not be confined to the members of his congregation alone.

Here, it is important to point out, is where the rabbi functioning as an official of the community can make an important contribution toward de-secularizing communal life in terms of the second aspect of secularism to which reference was made, the lack of religious spirit in communal activity. The rabbi can see Jewish life steadily and whole. By functioning within the community set-up, he can effect that coordination of social service and religious affirmation which will infuse social service wtih idealism and at the same time create opportunities for the concrete implementation of religious idealism. When the *kehillah* works as an organic unit, philanthropy becomes transmuted from sheer charity into *mitzvot,* such as *pidyon shevuyim* (the redemption of captives), and *gemilat hesed* (the extension of free loans). Civic protective activities become not the mere effort to assure Jews the right to live, but the striving to enable Jews to live free and unmolested lives *as Jews.*

At the present time, the attempt to introduce Jewish religious education into those institutions of social service supported by communal funds is met with evasion and sometimes with cold refusal. This would not be the case in a *kehillah* in which religion and religious education form an organic part. A *kehillah* thus committed to creative Jewish survival would naturally be expected to extend the influence of religion, not only through the congregations set up primarily for that purpose but also through those agencies whose primary purposes lie in other directions. We have frequently heard the suggestion made that rabbis be given places on the boards of communal agencies so that they might see to it that religion is not neglected in those agencies. In many places, that suggestion has been followed; but the results are unsatisfactory, because in those instances, the rabbis take their place as individuals. They do not represent anyone but themselves.

In a well-regulated *kehillah,* there would be need for many rabbis, to serve as preachers, educators, administrators, and as directors of social service activities. There would be, as there should be, opportunities for rabbis to serve in capacities other than as leaders of congregations. Such an arrangement would make for a greater degree of specialization and division of labor. This would be a vast improvement over present conditions. Today, rabbis are torn by a multiplicity of duties, both congregational and communal. They find little time, in most instances, to do the work for which they are best fitted and in which they are most interested. Under a new system, they could choose one branch of work and perform a more valuable service while at the same time fulfilling themselves more completely. Already there is discernible in the attitudes of some rabbini-

cal students an unwillingness to assume a conventional post in a congregation. They prefer, for example, working on the college campus to occupying a pulpit. Others choose to specialize in education; still others in Zionist work. These tendencies may seem, at first blush, to contribute further to the weakening of religion; but in truth they represent the very opposite tendency. They indicate the trend toward the extension of religious influence and the infiltration of the religious spirit into all areas of Jewish life. For the rabbi, they represent new fields of activity and new opportunities for service.

To summarize: to restore the centrality of the synagogue, we must once again look upon all Israel as itself constituting the *Keneset Yisrael,* as was the case before the Emancipation. By so doing, we shall come to realize that the unit of organization must again become the *kehillah* or community; that the *kehillah* must again make the maintenance and support of congregations one of its major responsibilities; and that officials with rabbinic training must be placed in charge of other communal activities conducted by the *kehillah,* so that they may be carried on in the spirit of religion and for the creative survival of the Jewish people.

Zionism and Segregation

By ELMER N. LEAR

AMONG the distressing embarrassments that Zionists have had to face is the accusation that they are promoting racism—the very cult that they so vigorously denounce—by advocating an unnatural cleavage from the bulk of mankind. That this rupture is not necessarily of their making is blissfully ignored. "Isn't it inconsistent," runs the charge, "for a group that has suffered so intensely at the hands of demoniacal racial practitioners and therefore must surely recognize the fiendish falsity of the doctrine, to itself affirm a cognate 'ism' "? This specious reasoning has found favor in the eyes of some who, by training and outlook, should have been aligned alongside the most ardent pro-Zionist—liberal intellectuals among Gentiles and Jews alike. Their wrath toward all manifestations of group "superiority," discrimination, and persecution is understandable, as is their inevitable alertness for any theoretical rationale of such crudities. Yet, this very sensitivity leads them to hasty conclusions, to confuse external similarities with essences.

"Segregation" Not Necessarily Vicious

Assuredly, there is nought of despicability or viciousness in regarding oneself as a member of a social unit, distinguishable from others by certain determinate attributes and definable postures. The highest creative propensities of an individual are liberated through the group medium, for here is provided the raw material wherewith true individuality is fashioned. To recognize and desire to preserve the difference of one's group is not the same as claiming for it inherent preeminence or a manifest destiny to extend its dominion over others. It is precisely this point that certain non-analytical liberals fail to grasp, and for this reason are either tepid or deprecative in their attitudes bearing upon the Zionist movement.

Frequently, this particular bloc ex-

presses its ideas in terms of opposition against what it denominates "segregation." It is pertinent to delve further into the connotation of this reproach and inquire whether it is inescapably condemnable. When this bloc brands Zionism as "segregationalist," it is conjuring up an image in the minds of its audience that is one of abhorrence and repulsiveness. There is visualized a leper colony, whose disease-ridden members are spued forth by society for its own protection, and in this retreat isolated from the main currents of human life, they pass a dreary and worthless existence. Or perhaps the picture is that of a reclusery where some weird person, ill-at-ease amongst "normal" people, adopts a self-imposed solitude. Is it to be wondered then that Zionists, indicted for their endorsement of "segregation," at once find themselves on the defensive, and take elaborate pains to demonstrate that their movement is free from these characteristics?

However, what is overlooked is that "segregation" may be the necessary preliminary to amalgamation. Segregation is not a forced dissociation of human beings when genuine association is wanting in the first instance. Indeed, a separation of elements only physically contiguous but not organically combined may be the means for effectuating a higher and lasting integration. Affinity, not proximity, is the secret of unity—a powerful attractional force that merges mutually complementary and inter-dependent bodies. During the stage of "segregation," the constituents can be purged of their non-combining qualities and of their resistances and the individuality of each can be more fully and perfectly worked out—the prelude to the emergence of mutual attractiveness. Furthermore, the knowledge on the part of each specimen of the kind (in particular of the minority kind accustomed to enforced disabilities) that the integrity of the whole is no longer dependent upon his unswerving adherence and that he will be spared the malignment of cowardly escapism will tend to facilitate such fusion.

Fallacy of the Liberals' Remedy for Anti-Semitism

The position of the Jew in the prebellum world was that of the man who could brush elbows with his non-Jewish neighbor, albeit seldom find himself sufficiently acceptable to penetrate within the charmed circle. This social ostracism generated the mental complexes that could be seized upon, enlarged and intensified whenever economic or political conditions deteriorated. In a word, for historic reasons whose treatment is beyond the scope of this paper, there existed a latent anti-Semitism ready to flare up, should tinder be propitiously applied.

According to the well-meaning but naive liberal bloc, the solution to this sorry state of affairs was to be found in tireless efforts at educating the masses and relentless struggle with those selfish interests who had vested rights in the exploitation of anti-Semitism. The fallacy in this approach lay in overconfidence concerning the power of education to modify thinking, while yet the objective environment, itself engendering distrust and hatred, remained depressed and misery-stricken as heretofore. Granted the historical background that gave birth to anti-Semitism, this loathsome excrescence has continued to feed upon and perpetuate itself. So long as economic and political instability persist (and temporary revivals should not breed a facile optimism), the ideational quirks act as counter-irritants, and in time of acute distress hideous persecution may serve as a temporary safety-valve. It is futile to try to rectify human thinking without simultaneously revising human living. Those liberals who cheerfully reckon on an era of good-feeling and brotherhood at the

termination of the present conflict do not take cognizance of the reality of Europe today. Fundamentally, it is the ubiquitous minority status of the Jew that will still expose him to future victimization, unbarred gross mingling with the Gentile notwithstanding.

The Therapeutic Value of Zionism

An individual or group placed in quarantine is neither sentenced to eternal confinement nor subjected to stigmatization. This isolation is the prerequisite for achieving his cure, and his return to the complete participation in communal affairs. The Jew today occupies the role of an outcast, even when he is officially endowed with civil rights. It is idle to contend that he is no more ill than are his neighbors, and that they must be brought to the realization that his exclusion is unwarrantable. In truth, the Jew is sick—somatically and mentally. The constant degradation, harrassment and brooding self-analysis to which he is condemned is itself a form of seclusion, but not the kind that provides therapy. Universal fraternity and cultural interchange may be the ideal of the liberal cosmopolite, but it cannot be brought about unilaterally—through renunciation on the part of the Jew alone. But, "segregation" may be the process whereby this ideal can be consummated.

In Palestine, the Jews are "segregated," according to one glib version. It is purposeless to endeavor to convince these doctrinaires how rich and multifarious are the contacts of the Yishuv with the remainder of the world. Here, though, a remarkable transformation is taking place in the Jewish personality and mode of living. Through the freedom to construct a sound economy without artificial hindrances, and through the liberty to pursue his own cultural values in his unique way without need for explanation or pressure to conform to other standards, the new Jew appears, a wholesome and balanced character.

From this segregation, in fact, renewed and augmented intercourse with humanity occurs. The Jew is now a respectable person, both in his own esteem and in that of his Gentile neighbor. He has proven his mettle and indicated that he can stand on his own feet. The misguided no longer need fear him as a nondescript, attempting to bore from within and undermine the security of society, for his own self-enhancement. What he can offer mankind, as in days of yore, is now appreciated. And should the entire world ascend to the heights where parochialisms are no longer needed, he is prepared to join with others in the universal act of self-divestment — for then, the entire world will have been elevated to a Zion, whence emanates the Law.

Thus is the description of the progression: from spatial propinquity, through constructive segregation, to organic integration. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis—the dialectician might summarize.

Discussion in Theology

The Authority of Tradition

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

THE Palestine "Conference on Religion," discussed in a preceding issue, threw a weird light on the present state of the Jewish religion. It made clear how woefully unprepared Jews are to build a modern religious civilization in Palestine. This unpreparedness is, to a large extent, due to the failure of modern-minded rabbis and scholars to grapple with the problem of religion. The effects of their conspiracy of silence are felt not only in Palestine. Here in America, the Jews have been tobogganing into the abyss of complete spiritual ignorance and indifference as a result of that same conspiracy. While our specialists in Jewish knowledge have been learning more and more, our laity are coming to know less and less.

In former times the conscientious rabbi might complain with the poet,

"Ah, the men of my own race
Bitter bad they may be
But at least they hear
The things I hear,
And they see the things I see."

Those halcyon days are long past when rabbis and congregation heard and saw the same things in Jewish life. Now they hear and see the same things only in the movies, which furnish some of their main sermon topics. That the rabbi and the congregation nowadays live in different universes of discourse is nobody's fault but the rabbi's. As a spiritual leader, he should have made it his business to guide and instruct his people in what they ought to know, and not merely to voice their wishful thinking.

Our men of learning do not discuss the problem of religion, because they are afraid of shocking the people. They are afraid to state frankly that they do not believe in the traditional account of the way the Jewish religion came into being. They are afraid to say that they regard the stories in the Pentateuch as legendary, even if here and there one catches a faint echo of historic fact. They are afraid to draw the logical consequences to Jewish religious belief that necessarily follow from the indisputable fact that the Pentateuch was neither received by Moses at Sinai nor handed by him to Joshua.

Of these logical consequences, the most important is that we cannot henceforth base our belief in God on historic events of a supernatural character, whether actual theophanies, or events like those alleged to have happened in the wilderness, or miracles like the plagues in Egypt and the dividing of the Red Sea. In traditional Judaism there was no need of giving special thought to the question of what we mean by God. Those stories were in themselves a sufficient answer. That answer was reenforced by the account of the creation of the world. Having been regarded as a record of what actually happened, those stories served as adequate proof of God's existence, power and special intervention in behalf of Israel.

That entire structure of belief has been undermined by the contemporary man's assumptions concerning what is historical and what is legendary. We, therefore, have to rebuild the entire framework of our religious life. *Our religious life will*

henceforth have to be based not on the authority of tradition but on personal conviction. All education in religion, whether elementary or advanced, will have to reckon with traditional religion only as part of the material on which to base personal conviction.

Personal conviction in Jewish religion will have to result from a twofold educational process. First, the process of reflection which is common to all men who think; second, the process of applying the results of such reflection to the traditions, experiences and hopes of the Jewish people.

The process of reflection which is to yield a tenable and workable conception of God will have to be kept free from the intricacies of metaphysics and theories of knowledge. Metaphysically, Whitehead and Alexander have formulated ideas of God which probably come nearest to objective reality. But how can such ideas ever serve as the basis of religion for the millions? For that reason, I doubt whether the definition of religion which Prof. Guttman suggested at the Conference in Palestine will be able to meet the need of our day. "Religion," he says, "means living *sub specie absolutis,* living in terms of the absolute, in contrast with living in terms of what is only relative. Jewish religion," he adds, "affirms as absolute the following three principles: a) the cosmic significance of every human deed, b) the ultimate triumph of the good, c) the unique worth of the individual human being."

Guttman, in my opinion, errs on two counts. In the first place, in assuming that the distinction between absolute and relative is not only a valid one, but also one which the average person can utilize as a basis of religious education and religious practice. Secondly, he credits Jewish religion with a monopoly on principles which, in reality, are held by adherents of different religious and philosophies of life. He thus prevents the normal functioning of personal conviction by being too metaphysical in his proposed idea of God and by failing to distinguish between the contribution of general human thought and the special contribution that the Jewish people can make.

I venture, accordingly, to propose a different approach to the problem of basing religion on personal conviction.

In the first place, we should be cognizant of an important fact that emerges from the entire history and anthropology of religion. That fact is that human beings identify as "divine" whatever renders life worth living. Thanks to his powers of memory, imagination and abstract thought, man is more sensitive than other creatures to the evils of life. Thanks, however, to his exceptionally strong will to live, he learns either to transform or to transcend those evils. In the very process of doing so, he affirms the worthwhileness of life. The manner of his affirmation, the ideas, emotions and actions which enter into it are determined by his cultural attainments. The term "God" helps to give, within each people, continuity to the process of affirming the worthwhileness of life. It also serves as a means of communicating that process from one people to another and from one civilization to another.

To believe in God is, accordingly, the exact equivalent of affirming the worthwhileness of life to such an extent that we regard life as deserving to elicit from us the best we can be and do, and to have us endure bravely the worst that can befall us. All praises and hymns to God are essentially affirmations of the inherent goodness and worthwhileness of life.

But the crucial question is: what renders life worthwhile? The ancients looked to their traditions for the answer. They

took for granted that their traditions had come from God—the source of life's worthwhileness — and they asked no further questions. The changes, however, that have taken place in human life have rendered whole populations dissatisfied with the answers given by their traditions. They want to arrive at the answer for themselves. And so we have different philosophies of life at war with one another, each claiming to be divine, or absolute, or capable of rendering life worthwhile. To choose from among them one which we can believe in with all our hearts, and at the same time find congenial to our status as Jews, is the second stage in the reflective process in which we must engage.

Only after having achieved the outlines of a philosophy that indicates what it is that renders life worthwhile—and therefore godlike—are we ready to revitalize Jewish religion. Revitalizing Jewish religion means reinterpreting the Jewish tradition in the light of that philosophy. It means creating a literature and art in which that modern philosophy is given sanction and depth by the abiding values in Jewish teaching. It means, above all, extending the scope of Jewish worship and prayer to include the ever widening range of human needs.

Book Notes

LEADING A JEWISH LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD by Rabbi S. H. Markowitz; Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Cincinnati, 1942; *pp.* 320.

"LEADING A Jewish Life in the Modern World" is an excellent book as far as it goes. Its doctrine may be characterized as "reconstructed" Reform, and may serve as an elaboration and application of the Reconstructionist pamphlet, "Toward a Guide for Jewish Ritual Usage," for use of Reform Jews. It has obvious deficiencies, to which I shall refer presently, but these detract little from the worth of Dr. Markowitz's book as a guide to all Jews of strong will who want to lead a Jewish life in the modern world.

There is a recognition in this book of the group character of religion, of the need for group discipline, and of religious ritual as a necessary discipline. Torah is broadly and correctly conceived as everything which makes "for the preservation of Israel and the perpetuation of Judaism," and there is a heartening emphasis, new in Reform circles, on the need for building a fence around the Torah—"a conscious, deliberate, and purposeful protection of the Jews against assimilation from without, and stagnation from within." (p. 49)

It is in the light of this need that Dr. Markowitz undertakes to demonstrate the meaning and the value of the Sabbath and each of the festivals and to indicate how they can best be celebrated in the modern American world in which we live. And Dr. Markowitz does not leave us with vague generalizations. He incorporates into the text specific suggestions as to prayers, decorations, games, songs and projects. In the appendix, he

adds recipes for Jewish dishes and other suggestions calculated to enrich the observance of the Sabbath and the Festivals. This book was written by a Reform Rabbi for a Reform public, and the reacceptance and reincorporation of many of the traditional customs and ceremonies mark a significant stage in the development of Reform Judaism in this country.

The book itself is divided into two parts; Part One, which is brief, deals with "Problems," and Part Two, which constitutes the major part of the book, with "Jewish Customs and Observance." Part One is not only relatively brief, but relatively weak. Dr. Markowitz views the central problem of the Jews in the modern world as that of insecurity, for which he has a ready cure, religion. "The security which our fathers enjoyed, and which enabled them to face persecution fearlessly, and meet their tragic end triumphantly, came from their religion." (p. 9). But nowhere do we get a definition of religion or an indication as to how religion can serve as an insurance policy against mortal peril in the modern world. In fact, Dr. Markowitz views definitions of religion as irrelevant, and is content merely to repeat: "Religion is essential. It gives a man a sense of security which results in serenity. Religion makes existence durable, and death meaningful." (p. 10). True that religion in the past "imbued Jewish character with moral purpose and strength." The question is why the Jewish religion does not do so today and how it can be made to do so. Merely to plead for a return to the Jewish religion and to call to have faith are not enough. What are Jews to have faith in? Jewish religious behavior should certainly be purposeful and directed to a goal, but Jews and Judaism should have their own excuse for being.

Dr. Markowitz duly stresses the peoplehood of Israel and identifies Torah with the totality of Jewish life. He has a chapter on Palestine which contains an excellent analysis of the historic role of Palestine in Jewish tradition and a stout defense of present-day Zionism and Palestine. He even takes occasion to denounce the individualism among the Jews which "has weakened the Jewish community and undermined those standards of Jewish behavior which were the mainstay of Israel's religion." (p. 40). But nowhere does he seem to understand clearly the implications of what he says. There is no consideration of the social structure of Jewish life, of the problems of community association and organization. The only communal institution recognized and treated is the synagogue. Even the reestablishment of Palestine as the Jewish National Home is ultimately treated as another religious *mitzvah*. "Just as philanthropy is but one phase of Judaism, so is the Holy Land but one element in the combination of elements called Jewishness." (p. 76).

Dr. Markowitz inveighs eloquently against the undermining of Jewish standards of behavior, but nowhere in the book do we have a discussion of Jewish behavior today, or proposals for a solution of modern Jewish problems. In his discussion of the meaning of the festivals, he makes certain vapid generalizations, such as the following, without going into their meaning or proof: "When security ceases to reside in universal truths, and men no longer enjoy the spiritual support of their tradition, then morality is no longer an enduring and permanent quality." (p. 168). Indeed one of the basic reasons for the breakdown of religion in the modern world is the lack of correspondence between the ritual, beliefs, preachments and practices of the Church or Synagogue, and the actual beliefs and behavior of men in society today. The Jewish religion will be restored to a place of primacy in the life of the Jews when it will prove its worth and value in all of life's relations, when it can become

a path of salvation in this world in which we live.

Excellent as Part Two is, it is taken up almost wholly with the Sabbath and the Festivals. There is a short chapter on "Daily Religion and the Modern Jew," but aside from the section on worship in the home, it is quite skimpy. It deals briefly with the dietary laws and the wearing of the hat and some minor matters, but aside from these, the discussion of daily religious behavior is quite limited. There is no consideration of the special occasions in the life of the individual or the family or the group, such as birth, circumcision, marriage or death, nor, for that matter, of education or *tzedakah* or *mitzvot* in general.

In sum, Dr. Markowitz's book is in many respects a remarkable achievement, but though Dr. Markowitz often writes like a Reconstructionist, his Reform training trips him up; Judaism still remains a religion in the narrow sense in which it is understood in the classical Reform ideology.

The Retreat of the Economic Motive

By THEODORE FRIEDMAN

Not by bread alone doth man live.
(Deuteronomy 8:3)
Forty-eight points per month.
(OPA)

WHAT has been the consistent burden of prophet and philosopher, of preacher and poet? What is the unending thread on which they have all strung the vari-colored beads of their thought and pleading? Has it not been the call to man to deliver himself from the engrossing bonds of all kinds of materialism? In the struggle between the flesh pots of Egypt and freedoom from bondage, the prophets, philosophers, preachers and poets, with few erratic exceptions, stood on one side; the mass of men on the other. The masses have always lived as if they were seeking to confute the Biblical conclusion that man cannot live by bread alone. It is only in the modern age that the practice was transformed into a philosophy. The basic faith of the capitalist and the communist was identical: the latter sought to demonstrate "scientifically" that the means of production determine life; the capitalist, while overtly denying the proposition, nevertheless lived as if it were true. For what in a capitalist society determines a man's status, his influence, his prestige, if not his economic position?

This has been the first article of faith of the modern age; a faith from which few dissented. It has pervaded all of life and where it has not corrupted it, it has left large masses sodden and dull, unresponsive to the call of the spirit. Prof. Pitirim Sorokin calls them the "products of a sensate culture"; more graphically, Louis Mumford dubs them the "passive barbarians." We see them everywhere, the desensitized people who never think, never read, never feel beyond the shallowest level. All the pleas and allurements of the "spiritualists" (writers, preachers, etc.), have ever fallen on dulled ears. No one yet has ever thought up a really convincing argument against a sixteen cylinder Cadillac or a two-carat diamond ring. These you see and feel. They give you a pleasant physical sensation plus, of course, their prestige value. The argument, the poem, the truth must be understood, apprehended. Hence, the pleading of the "spiritualists" might well have continued

interminably and with the same results.

Latterly, support has come from an unexpected source. Let anyone try to live by bread alone (read automobiles, furs, furnishings, etc.), in a rationed economy. There is simply not enough to go around. The "materialists" will not admit defeat so readily. Congress revokes the twenty-five thousand dollar salary limit. Whether they know it or not, they are fighting a hopeless, delaying action. Money is valuable for the things it can purchase. When the purchasables are rationed and you net forty-eight points no matter what your wealth, money is rapidly losing its value. Indeed, the "materialists" are facing a two-front attack, at least for the duration. War unites a society around the common goal of victory. A man's place in such society is determined by what he contributes towards the attainment of that goal. His economic status is of minor consequences. Let him perform a heroic deed and he will be acclaimed. Let him become the victorious general and the American people, without overmuch regard for his non-military qualifications, will elect him President. Service to one's country becomes the yardstick of a man's worth. The soldier decorated for bravery is the hero of a society at war; the war millionaire becomes the scoundrel. So completely is the economic motive displaced in war time.

Is the retreat of the economic motive merely a passing phenomenon? Or is it perhaps a token of things to come; the first rumblings of the end of "economic man"? Only an economist endowed with prophecy can tell. Permanent or not, a lesson has been taught. A society need not live by bread alone. It can live well on forty-eight points per months. It can find abundant satisfactions by recourse to the non-rationables, the things of the spirit. To share the latter is to diminish no one's supply; indeed, it is to multiply everyman's share.

Correspondence

What Do We Mean by Hebrew?

Sirs:

In recent issues of *The Reconstructionist,* Rabbi Barish and Dr. Chomsky marshalled arguments for and against the dispensability of the Hebrew language. It seemed to me that both the learned disputants were victims of a grave semantic error: they did not explain what the "Hebrew language" *is.*

If we insist that the term "Hebrew language" implies its use in daily or literary discourse, we rule out nine-tenths of the Jewish people. Insistence on knowledge of the Bible and other Hebrew writings disposes likewise of most Jewish men and women. How many Jews shall we say find it indispensable to read and follow Hebrew prayers with understanding, and how many are quite satisfied merely to be able to join in the simplest responses and hymns? And would this ability, or the remembering of ten, fifty, or a hundred Hebrew terms,—would it represent the *Hebrew language* to Rabbi Barish and to Dr. Chomsky? I think not.

The Hebrew language is not an entity, a substance, a unitary ingredient of anything, of which the learned doctors can say it is or it is not a necessary condition. The term "Hebrew language" refers actually to six or seven different linguistic activities of varying proportions of the Jewish people, with considerable overlapping and with frequent shifting of individuals from one group to another.

A more realistic approach to the question of the "indispensability" of "Hebrew" would run like this: Since these six or seven different linguistic activities, over thousands of years and under all kinds of internal and external social pressures, have survived among groups of Jews everywhere, the chances are that these groups of Jews have found these linguistic activities to satisfy some of their social needs. The same could be said of the "holidays," of institutions like the "synagogue," and so on. Each of these terms signifies many different social procedures carried out by distinct but overlapping and constantly changing social groups.

The carrying out of these procedures takes place in real life without regard to the arguments of Rabbi Barish and Dr. Chomsky. Is the necktie indispensable for masculine wear? Which is better on a rainy day?—overshoes or an umbrella? Was Washintgon or Lincoln the greater American? It would be better for our wise men to spend more effort on understanding what actually takes place in Jewish group life, and on learning how to control desirable changes in what takes place, rather than on medieval debates about angels on needle-points.

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